6523.0 - Income Distribution, Australia, 1999-2000

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Income Growth Varies Over Past Two Years

Average gross incomes in Australia increased by 10% between 1997-98 and 1999-2000, with wage and salary based incomes increasing by 8%, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The average gross income of income units ¾ i.e. single people, or couples or sole parents and their dependent children ¾ who are primarily dependent on wages and salaries was $961 per week. This compares with an average of $726 per week for all income units.

For income units primarily dependent on government pensions and allowances, average gross incomes increased by 4% to $267 per week. For those mainly reliant on sources of income such as unincorporated business income, interest, rent, dividends and superannuation, the average increase was 14%.

While average gross income growth varied according to the source of income, there was little change in the overall distribution of income. After adjusting gross income to take account of the redistributive impact of the personal income tax system and differences in the size and composition of income units, the bottom 20% of income units accounted for about 7% of total income and the top 20% accounted for about 40%.

About 65% of units in the bottom 20% of income units were mainly reliant on government pensions while about 10% were reliant on wages and salaries. This compares with about 85% of the top 20% being reliant on wages and salaries. The remaining 15% of units in the top 20% were reliant on sources such as unincorporated business income, interest, rent, dividends and superannuation.

Details are in **Income Distribution, Australia, 1999-2000** (cat. no. 6523.0) which is available from ABS Bookshop. This media release and a summary of the publication can be found on this site.

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